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KAUA'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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Hurricane season starts on June 1

LĪHU'E – The official hurricane season in the central Pacific region, which includes Hawai'i, starts on June 1 and runs through Nov. 30.

According to the National Weather Service, this year's outlook calls for five to eight tropical cyclones with a 40 percent chance of an above-normal season, a 40 percent chance of a normal season, and only a 20 percent chance of a below-normal season.

The outlook is a general guide to the overall seasonal hurricane activity in the Central Pacific basin and does not predict whether or how many of these systems will affect Hawai'i.

An average season has four or five storms, which includes tropical depressions, tropical storms as well as hurricanes.

"With the hurricane season on the horizon, it is important for the public to plan and prepare for hurricanes now, and not just wait until a storm threatens the state," said Kaua'i Emergency Management Agency (KEMA) Administrator Elton Ushio. "Every family should have their own disaster preparedness plan and take the time to practice it."

He noted that disaster kits should include at least a 14-day supply of non-perishable food, four quarts of bottled water per person per day, a battery powered radio, flashlight, an extra supply of prescription medicines and other items specific to individual and family needs.

Mayor Bernard Carvalho Jr. echoed Ushio's recommendation on preparedness.

“While Kaua‘i residents have shown their resiliency in dealing with and recovering from disasters such as hurricanes Iwa and Iniki, it is essential that we never let our guard down,” said the mayor. “I encourage families and neighbors to prepare and work together as a team. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.”

Ushio also noted that a natural hazard preparedness workshop is scheduled on June 8 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Hanapēpē Public Library.

Among the topics that will be covered are hurricane science and prediction for 2017, home strengthening, and personal preparedness.

“We are honored that representatives from a number of our emergency management partners will be coming to Kaua‘i to share their expertise,” Ushio said. “I encourage residents to attend this workshop and learn how to minimize their risks before disaster strikes.”

The workshop is a collaborative effort between the Kaua‘i Emergency Management Agency, University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program, Hanapēpē/‘Ele‘ele Community Association and Hawai‘i Hazards Awareness and Resilience Program, Hawai‘i Emergency Management Agency, Hawai‘i State Public Library System, and the National Weather Service.

Other organizations involved in this effort include Simpson Strong Tie, Hawai‘i State Department of Land and Natural Resources, State Farm Insurance and the American Red Cross.

The Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) continuously monitors weather conditions, employing a network of satellites, land- and ocean-based sensors and aircraft reconnaissance missions operated by NOAA and its partners. Complex computer modeling and human expertise serve as the basis for the hurricane center’s track and intensity forecasts that extend out five days.

The CPHC issues a Hurricane or Tropical Storm Watch when a hurricane or tropical storm-force winds are possible within 48 hours.

A Hurricane or Tropical Storm Warning is issued when a hurricane or tropical storm-force winds are expected to strike within 36 hours.

When either a watch or a warning is issued, residents and visitors should listen to their local radio or TV stations and monitor local web/internet media and websites for official weather information and instructions from emergency management entities.

Information on planning and preparation regarding hurricane season is available on the county website, www.kauai.gov, or the Central Pacific Hurricane Center website, <http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/cphc/>.

To sign up for the county's free emergency notification service, Connect CTY, please go to the county website, www.kauai.gov.

Connect CTY is designed to quickly inform residents and businesses about civil defense emergencies including: tsunamis; hurricanes; earthquakes; flash floods; and any other situation that could impact the safety, property, or welfare of residents and visitors.

Those without Internet access can have their phone number and other pertinent information added to the county database by calling the Kaua'i Emergency Management Agency at 241-1800.